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Mrs. Hazenby's Health

A Play in One Act

By

CURTIS BROWN

PRICE SIXPENCE NET

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32, Great Portland Street, W.
New York: Samuel French, 28-30, West Thirty-Eighth Street.

1912.

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CHARACTERS.

Dr. Stanford Stearnes.

Mrs. Hazenby (*An Invalid*).

Constance (*Mrs. Hazenby's daughter*).

Sophy (*An old family servant*).

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MRS. HAZENBY'S HEALTH.

SCENE:—*Drawing-room, with sofa piled with cushions, centre table holding books and a number of bottles, pitcher of water and glasses; mantel holding more bottles and little packages, glass with a paper over it and a spoon on top, mixed up with ordinary bric-à-brac. Large thermometer on wall. Capacious and comfortable arm-chair, with rug in it. Screen before door* (L).

At rise of curtain, SOPHY *discovered at centre table, holding bottle up to eye, measuring dose with her thumb, and squinting at it.*

SOPHY. There now! that's to the next mark. You pours it out to there, Sophy, and then you splops* it into the glass, so, and then you pours water on to it, so, and then you puts a napkin on to it, so, and then you lays the spoon across, just so. (*Places glass on table.*) Now, if you was to lay it this way (*changing angle*), the missus would be took wopply. (*Mimics.*) "Ah! I'm that faint, Sophy! Bring me the salts." Poor thing! I suppose she always does suffer terrible with her nerves. But—(*hand-bell heard from room behind the screen*). Yes'm, yes'm. (*Goes to mantel at* R. *Opens small paper of powders.*) Things this new doctor gives her is no good. Oh, if she had only Dr. Stearnes back again! Now, *he* tells her what's what. H'm! I could eat a cupful of this stuff without giving me no improvements.

(*Bell rings more violently.*)

Yes'm, yes'm; I'm just getting your powders. (*To herself.*) Why the stuff doesn't even smell! (*She opens paper and sniffs, as bell is thrown from adjoining room on to stage.* SOPHY *jumps, and powder flies over her face and dress.*)

Enter MRS. HAZENBY, *leaning heavily on cane, with left hand over her heart.*

MRS. HAZENBY (*sharply*). Sophy!

SOPHY (*keeping her back turned towards* MRS. H.). Yes'm, yes'm; I heard you ring, and was a-hastening to get your powders ready for you to take. (*She tries to brush off powder with one hand, holding in the other the paper, manifestly empty.*)

* N.B.—SOPHY is somewhat given to the manufacture of words.

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MRS. H. (*sinking wearily into chair*). I might have died alone and unattended, while waiting for you to answer that bell. Whatever will you do when the Angel Gabriel sounds the Last Trump, and you just standing round and saying, "Yes'm, yes'm"? What are you doing there?

SOPHY (*cheerfully, after a moment's pause*). Yes'm. Now, here we are. Shut your eyes, and open your mouth. (*She backs towards* MRS. H. *The latter obeys, and* SOPHY *cheerfully goes through the form of emptying powders on her tongue from the empty paper.*)

MRS. H. (*tasting*). Humph! Doesn't seem to taste much.

SOPHY (*nervously, still trying to get powder off dress*). No'm, no'm. That new doctor's stuff never does; and it won't do you no good, neither.

MRS. H. (*mouthing, and screwing up her face as she tries to taste it*). It hasn't that nasty flavour I found in that previous (*scornfully*) physician's medicine.

SOPHY (*with another furtive touch to her skirt.*) No'm, no'm. I expect there ain't much to it.

MRS. H. (*feeling of her heart doubtfully*). It has a queer effect —increases the heart's action painfully. (*Alarmed.*) Oh! how it jumps!

SOPHY. Makes you feel sort of goppy?

MRS. H. (*staring at* SOPHY). Goppy? I don't know the word. (*Nervously.*) The effect will be beneficial, I trust.

SOPHY (*smoothing* MRS. H.'s *hair and generally tidying her.*) Yes'm. But you said only this morning that this medicine hadn't done you no good.

MRS. H. None of it had—before. This seems more powerful. I *wonder* if the man knows what he's about?

SOPHY *makes some commotion, putting her hand to her mouth, laughing.*

What are you jiggling around for, Sophy?

SOPHY. It's my nerves, mum; they're all wiggly this morning.

MRS. H. (*sternly.*) You must take something for them.

SOPHY. You're not looking so well yourself this morning, ma'am.

MRS. H. (*instantly assuming lugubrious face, and sighing.*) No, I am not. I feel as if there were carpet tacks all running up and down my veins.

SOPHY (*bored*). It was toads hopping up and down your spinal column yesterday morning. Them was your very words.

MRS. H. Well, I find the toads were preferable to the carpet tacks. Oh! (*Groans.*)

SOPHY. Ah, ma'am, if you would only go back to Dr. Stearnes! He was a-doin' of you so much good.

MRS. H. (*accentuating with her cane*). Sophia, I wish you never to mention that man again.

SOPHY. Never again, ma'am. No'm.

MRS. H. Any doctor who could tell me to my face that there wasn't anything the matter with me, when I was suffering such tortures——

SOPHY. Toads and carpet tacks——

MRS. H. Yes, indeed. Such a man was no more fitted to be a doctor than I am fitted to turn somersaults in a circus ring.

SOPHY. He cured Miss Constance when the other doctors had given her up.

MRS. H. He gave altogether too much attention to my daughter after she was *quite* recovered, and when he was being paid to attend to *me*. Anyone might suppose that *she* was the invalid still.

SOPHY. She ain't been looking well, ma'am. No, ma'am, not at all well, ma'am, since Dr. Stearnes left us, and you called in that new man.

MRS. H. (*anxiously*). Hasn't she, Sophy? I hadn't noticed. She must begin to take something at once. Has she been down this morning?

SOPHY. No, ma'am.

MRS. H. Call her.

SOPHY. Yes, ma'am. (*Starts to go.*)

MRS. H. Tell her, Sophia, that I slept very badly last night.

SOPHY. Yes'm, I'll tell her. [*Exit.*

MRS. H. (*looking at her watch, and rising feebly*). Gracious! it's past the hour for my exercises. I wish that Dr. What's-his-name hadn't prescribed such a thing. It makes me look like a fool. (*She makes fantastic revolutions, first with one leg and then with the other; also arms, counting as she does so.*) My daughter will be pleased to see her aged mother conducting herself like this. (*She bends down, resting hands on arm of sofa, and hops, counting.*) One, two, three! Perfectly scandalous! One, two, three! Fancy one of my years popping up and down like a silly pony in a go-cart! One, two, three! Dr. Stearnes didn't understand my case, but he never would have made me as ridiculous as this. I feel myself positively blushing. One, two, three!

Enter CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE (*alarmed*). Mamma! What on *earth* are you doing?

MRS. H. (*in terror*). Heavens! my child; how you frightened me!

CONSTANCE. But what——

MRS. H. (*with dignity*). My child, you may as well know the worst at once. I am somewhat disappointed with our new physician.

CONSTANCE (*dolefully*). Of course. Is he responsible for—for that? (*She copies* MRS. H.'s *motions.*)

MRS. H. Constance, this—*this*—(*repeating motion*) is what your mother is called upon to perform by that new Dr. What's-his-name.

CONSTANCE. Robinson?

MRS. H. Yes, or Popson. Whatever his name is, he is an idiot!

CONSTANCE. But, mamma, you must give him a fair trial. You're surely looking better this morning.

MRS. H. (*indignantly*). I am looking worse this morning than any other day since Dr. Stearnes forsook me. I feel as if scrapers were going up and down inside my veins. I don't see why he should have left me to become the helpless victim of this—(*swings her leg, indicating her exercise*) congenital donkey.

CONSTANCE (*wearily*). He wouldn't have left you if you had not peremptorily dismissed him.

MRS. H. (*examining paper from which powders have been given, and sniffing at it suspiciously*). No, he never would have left me as long as *you* were around.

CONSTANCE (*furtively wiping her eyes*). Mamma! You know he was genuinely interested in your case.

MRS. H. (*satirically*). Yes; he *seemed* to be. Said bread pills and water would do me just as much good as any other medicine, if I would only stop thinking about it. As if I could stop thinking about it, when I feel as if there were porcupines inside my legs and arms!

CONSTANCE. "Porcup"—mamma! It was toads.

MRS. H. My dear, I said porcupines.

CONSTANCE. Well, anyway, Dr. Stearnes never talked to me in that way.

MRS. H. I daresay not; but he did to me, the brute!

CONSTANCE. Mamma!

MRS. H. The unsympathetic beast!

CONSTANCE. Please, don't!

MRS. H. I am glad I told him exactly what I thought of him. Oh, my side! And he understood my case so well. (*She again tastes the paper of powders, and makes a face.*)

CONSTANCE. I thought you said he didn't understand it at all?

MRS. H. (*scorning to answer*). Constance, I wonder if he would come back to us if I wrote him a very nice note, and told him I had forgiven him, and should try to tolerate him?

CONSTANCE. I'm afraid he wouldn't.

MRS. H. Well, he must! I'm worse every day. And, besides, you need him, dear. Sophy says you haven't been at all well of late, and now that my attention is called to it, it seems to me that you are quite pale. You write to him, dear. H'm! (*Significantly.*) He'll come. At least, *you* didn't dismiss him.

CONSTANCE (*turning her face away toward front of stage*). Mamma, I—I think I did.

MRS. H. What do you mean, child?

CONSTANCE (*as if on the point of sobbing*). I mean that—that I dismissed him, too!

MRS. H. What do you say it in such a hoogly-googly way for? You don't mean that——

CONSTANCE. Yes, I do. I mean that he asked me to marry him.

MRS. H. (*starting from chair, and displaying much vigour*). Outrageous! Simply outrageous! He knows you're the only person left who doesn't get on my nerves. And the absolutely barbaric selfishness of wanting you to devote yourself to him, and leave your poor invalid mother in such extremities simply surpasses belief! How you must hate him!

CONSTANCE. N—No. But I told him I should never leave you.

MRS. H. Certainly. What did he say to that? Did it begin to dawn upon him then that he was a selfish brute?

CONSTANCE (*leading* MRS. H. *back to chair*). He acted very nobly. He said that, of course, he would take you, too.

MRS. H. How truly noble of him! Well, I won't be taken. And he has a splendid house, too, Oh, my side! And it was *so* convenient to have him next door. But bread pills! And water! H'm! "Stop thinking about my nerves," when they feel as if they had swallowed fish-hooks!

CONSTANCE. Porcupines, mamma.

MRS. H. No, indeed; fish-hooks. You poor child! how annoying it must have been to you! Was he much crushed? I hope you crushed him well?

CONSTANCE. I told him that nothing would alter my determination.

MRS. H. Bellowed like a bull, I suppose? Just as he always did. I declare, there was something supporting in that bellow of his. You could fairly cling to it. They ought to have it for storms in a theatre.

CONSTANCE. He seemed rather broken-hearted, mamma. He was very quiet.

MRS. H. He *could* be gentle enough when he tried. (*She droops.*) All this excitement is beginning to make me faint. Oh! my heart feels tipped over. (CONSTANCE *hastens to her.*) I must take something at once. What is that new medicine for the heart.

CONSTANCE (*frightened*). I don't know which it is. I'll ask Sophy. (*Runs to bell-rope.*)

MRS. H. No, no; don't ring. Get her yourself. I should be dead before she answered the bell. (CONSTANCE *starts to open door.*) Or, no,—you mustn't leave me alone. Ring! ring! (CONSTANCE *rings, and rushes back to her mother.*) Here; give me some of that in the glass—quick!

CONSTANCE. But are you sure that's the right one?

MRS. H. (*faintly*). It doesn't matter—all same—fool doctor—give quick! (CONSTANCE *frightened, gives teaspoonful from glass on mantel. After much gasping, while* CONSTANCE *strokes her head tenderly.*) There—so—that's better. (*Business.*) That Dr. What's-his-name is not altogether useless.

Enter SOPHY, *in apparent haste, as* CONSTANCE *is still holding glass and watching her mother anxiously.*

SOPHY. Good gracious! Miss Constance, where'd you get that glass from?

CONSTANCE. From the mantel.

SOPHY. Merciful Heavings!

MRS. H. *and* CONSTANCE. What is the matter? Quick, Sophy!

SOPHY. Why, you've took the one with the pink paper on!

MRS. H. Well, well—pink paper isn't poison!

SOPHY. Oh! ain't it, though!

MRS. H. Help!

SOPHY. Only one drop is the dose!

MRS. H. Run, Constance!

SOPHY. And you've took a spoonful!

MRS. H. Run, Sophy!

SOPHY. It's terrible powerful!

MRS. H. Horrible! Horrible!

SOPHY (*at top of her voice*). It wasn't to be took inside at all!

MRS. H. I've been poisoned! I'm sinking! Send for the doctor instantly! Oh—h—h! (*More and more faintly.*)

SOPHY. Yes'm. Yes'm. (*Rushes out of door* R.)

CONSTANCE, *who has poured out brandy, gives it to* MRS. H. SOPHY *re-opens door, putting her head in.*

SOPHY. Er—which doctor, ma'am?

MRS. H. (*starting up with unexpected energy.*) Dr. Stanford Stearnes—next door—of course, stupid! Think I'll have the idiot who has poisoned me in the house again! (*Resumes her state of collapse.*) [*Exit* SOPHY.

CONSTANCE. But mamma. Dr. Stearnes won't know what that stuff is you've taken. The other doctor would.

MRS. H. Oh! I'm dead! What will you ever do without me, Constance? (*With sudden indignation, and forgetting her faintness.*) Of course Dr. Stearnes will know. He always used to know exactly what to do for me. Why do you always attack him? You are positively viperish, Constance!

CONSTANCE (*going on her knees, and smoothing* MRS. H.'s *face gently*). Don't, mamma, please! I can't bear it. (*Aside*). I think my heart would break if I had to part with him all over again.

MRS. H. Eh? What's that you're mumbling?

CONSTANCE. Nothing, nothing. Do you feel better now? He'll be here in a moment—if he comes at all.

MRS. H. If he comes at all! Do you realise, child, that I may be breathing my last at this moment? Have you no heart! Why don't you get frightened?

CONSTANCE. Somehow, I can't. I'm almost sure you are not in danger.

MRS. H. (*wails*). To think I should receive such a blow from my only child!

CONSTANCE. Dearie, I didn't mean to be cruel. These are his office hours, mamma, but he'll come if he's in. It will only take a minute. I think I hear them now. (*Listens.*) Yes; that's his step on the stairs; I'm going. (*She runs to the door.*)

MRS. H. Constance, come back here at once! Constance, I say! Constance! [*Exit* CONSTANCE, *as* DOCTOR *enters.*

DOCTOR. Constance!

Enter SOPHY, *out of breath, behind* DOCTOR.

DOCTOR (*turning to* SOPHY). Where is she, you woman? Don't stand there puffing like a locomotive! Come!

SOPHY (*trying to catch her breath, while* MRS. H. *goes unnoticed*). I am—you didn't understand—I—I—was so—so—bazzledasted—perhaps I—didn't—get it—straight. Oh—I am—so—out of—b—breath! It's Mrs. Hazenby what's took. Miss Constance is only scared.

DOCTOR (*with great emphasis*). *I will be*—— (*He holds the missing word in with his hand, while* MRS. H. *and* SOPHY *stop their ears.* MRS. H. *squeals faintly.* DOCTOR *turns and bows to* MRS. H. *ceremoniously.*) I bid you good morning, madam. (*Starts to go. Then, sotto voce to* SOPHY.) I could give *you* some medicine!

SOPHY (*throwing herself on her knees and holding him around the legs, while* MRS. H. *gasps and groans notably*). Dear, good, kind doctor, give me boiled elephants if you want to, but don't have two murders on your hands!

MRS. H. Help! help!

DOCTOR (*calmly*). I will send your regular physician to you.

MRS. H. I won't have him!

SOPHY (*pointing to* MRS. H.). Go to her, 'tend to her quick! 'Tend to her! She's took poison. She's a dying woman. You can't leave her a-demising like this!

As DR. STEARNES *turns to observe her critically,* MRS. H. *collapses and hangs over arm of chair.*

DOCTOR. Let go—leggo my legs!—professional etiquette be blowed! What's she taken? (*Jumps over and straightens* MRS. H. *in her chair, listens to her heart, feels her forehead, looks into her mouth with great rapidity and decision. Speaks quickly and decisively while holding her pulse.*) What was it she took, I say?

SOPHY. Pizen—*pizen*—PIZEN!

DOCTOR. Where is it?

SOPHY (*hand on her stomach*). Here.

DOCTOR. Bah! Get me some of the stuff she took, if there's any left. Quick!

SOPHY (*bustling and fumbling around for glass*). Yes, sir; yes, sir. This is it. Will she die soon? Is she——

DOCTOR. Stop your noise!

SOPHY. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. (*Aside, wiping her eyes effusively.*) What, oh! what will Miss Constance do?

DOCTOR (*still holding pulse in right hand, glass in left, smells cautiously, touches tongue gingerly to it, tastes carefully, touches tongue to it with more confidence, takes a sip, spits it out, and drops* MRS. H.'s *hand unceremoniously. Then, turning to* SOPHY). Anything special this was to be given for?

SOPHY. Put in her eyes at night. Squdged.

DOCTOR. Squdged?

SOPHY. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. You know—squdged like this. (*Business illustrating use of eye-dropper.*) Is it ar—arsenix or stritch-nine?

DOCTOR. It's salt and water.

(MRS. H. *groans and shows signs of life.*)

SOPHY. Then she ain't dead ? (MRS. H. *groans quite vigorously.*)

DOCTOR (*judicially*). N—no. (*Loud groans.*) No—no, I don't think she's dead. (*Dropping his sarcasm.*) But she has had a bad scare, though. We must put her to bed, and then you must call her physician. Evidently he knows exactly the sort of thing to give her.

MRS. H. (*faintly*). Stay, doctor ! stay !

DOCTOR (*decided*). Most certainly *not*. You dispensed with my services for telling you the truth about yourself.

MRS. H. Nothing of the sort.

DOCTOR. Can you walk, madam ?

MRS. H. Stanford Stearnes, how dare you "madam" me? I've known you since you were young enough to spank; and I wish I'd done it !

DOCTOR (*icily*). Can you walk, madam ?

MRS. H. (*faintly again*). No, I can't. You'll have to carry me in your arms.

DOCTOR (*to* SOPHY). Take hold of her feet.

MRS. H. Oh, doctor, not that way !

DOCTOR (*to* SOPHY, *after taking* MRS. H. *under the arms*). Got her ? Here she goes, then ! (*They march out through door* L. DOCTOR'S *voice heard from adjoining room.*) There ! there's nothing much the matter with you, except fright ; but you'd better call in your physician.

(MRS. H.'S *voice from room beyond :* "Brute !")

DOCTOR (*backing out of door on stage*). Thank you, and good morning. (*Turns and strides off towards door* R., *snapping his fingers.*) Humph ! And that fool woman is *her* mother !

SOPHY (*entering on tip-toe, and whispering*). Doctor ! Doctor ! (*Catches him by the coat-tail as he is about to disappear.*) You *must* listen ! It is about Miss Constance.

DOCTOR (*stopping and turning, voice softened*). Well ?

SOPHY. She needs you.

DOCTOR. Did she say so ?

SOPHY. She wants you.

DOCTOR (*emphatically*). Did—she—say—so ? Are you deaf ?

SOPHY. No, no ; I'm not deaf. (DOCTOR *snorts, and turns to go.*) Yes, yes, yes, yes ! she *did* say so.

DOCTOR (*turning sharply*). Why did you hesitate, then ?

SOPHY. I was so flabbergasted by such a funny question.

DOCTOR. Oh! Try to unflabbergast yourself, then. Don't you see me waiting? (*Sits.*)

SOPHY. I'll go and get her. (*Aside*) I'm in for it now! [*Exit.*

DOCTOR (*jumps up nervously, tries another chair; jumps up again, and walks about, sighing heavily*). Now, who'd have thought I could make myself such a fool over a woman! Confound that girl! I love her more than ever. (*Enter* CONSTANCE.) Well?

CONSTANCE (*tremulously*). Well?

DOCTOR (*louder*). Well?

CONSTANCE. Sophy said you wished to see me.

DOCTOR. Oh! she did, did she?

CONSTANCE. But, apparently, you don't.

DOCTOR. H'm! couldn't exactly say that. The man who didn't want to see you would need medical attention.

CONSTANCE. What would you prescribe for him?

DOCTOR. Strychnine every half hour, large doses. In case he wanted to see you too often, strychnine every few minutes, larger doses. (CONSTANCE *laughs faintly, and suddenly puts her hand to her heart.*) Constance, you're not well.

CONSTANCE. Oh, yes, I am; perfectly well. (*Clutches at chair to support herself.*)

DOCTOR (*jumping toward her, seizes her hand and slips her into chair.*) What's the trouble?

CONSTANCE (*turning away face, but leaving her hand with the* DOCTOR.) I was frightened about mamma.

DOCTOR. Mother's all right. But you. (*He counts her pulse fondly.*) Rather rapid.

CONSTANCE. Yes, it's my heart.

DOCTOR. That organ seemed quite untouched the last time I saw you.

CONSTANCE (*facing him sadly*). You—you've finished counting, perhaps?

DOCTOR. I beg your pardon. (*Lays her hand reverently in her lap.*)

CONSTANCE. Please go now. I couldn't do it all over again. Oh; you're making it so hard for me! (*She buries head in hands, and sobs.*)

DOCTOR (*aside.*) Hard for her! She could not do it all over again! (*Walks about in perplexity; then stops short, and distress in his face gradually changes to joy. He strides suddenly over to her, lifts her head gently, and turns it toward him.*) Hard for you, Constance?

CONSTANCE (*clutching one of his hands in both of hers lovingly*). Yes—I didn't mean to let you know.

DOCTOR. Girlie! (*Starts to put his arm round her.*)

CONSTANCE (*drawing back*). You must go now. I haven't changed my mind.

DOCTOR (*explosively*). But I've changed mine! Constance, I'm an ass!

CONSTANCE (*starting back*). What do you mean by such language?

DOCTOR (*radiantly, hugging himself with joy, and walking about*). I'm a blooming, blithering, bounding ass!

CONSTANCE. Would you mind explaining yourself?

DOCTOR. I recently asked you to marry me, didn't I?

CONSTANCE. You did. And pray is that the reason you're an—

DOCTOR (*shouting*). No, no, no! Or, stay—hold on—wait a bit! Yes. That *is* the reason. That's *exactly* the reason.

CONSTANCE (*with dignity*). Thank you.

DOCTOR. And you said you couldn't think of it?

CONSTANCE. I did.

DOCTOR. Said you didn't love me, never had loved me, never would love me?

CONSTANCE (*grieved*). I never said one of those things.

DOCTOR. Maybe you didn't; but you thought them—eh?

CONSTANCE. Never!

DOCTOR. Ho, ho! And yet I got up off my knees and went away like a whipped school-boy! Well, don't you see that's where I'm an—same animal as I mentioned before?

CONSTANCE (*helplessly*). No, I don't quite see.

DOCTOR. Well, I'm a medical man by profession.

CONSTANCE. So I've heard.

DOCTOR. Well, when I give pills to my patients, I don't get down on my knees and bleat: "Will you accept this humble pill?"

CONSTANCE. No, you bulldoze them.

DOCTOR (*joyously*). Precisely! I say: "Here, this is what's good for you. You take it; never mind what you think about it." And it always does them good, especially if they have confidence in me.

CONSTANCE. Yes; you seem to cure them.

DOCTOR (*taking her hand*). I'm going to cure you. You need my care, and you're going to get it. (*Slips his arm round her waist.*) Come; it's my prescription. I know my business to-day.

CONSTANCE (*weakening*). But you're acting outrageously!

DOCTOR. Why didn't you tell me before that you cared for me?

CONSTANCE. I haven't said so now.

DOCTOR. Ho! ho! ho! And haven't you, indeed! (*Holds her close to him.*)

CONSTANCE (*letting herself go*). Oh, Stanford! Can it be for the best?

DOCTOR (*after a hearty kiss*). I am of the opinion that it can.

CONSTANCE. But mamma wouldn't bear it.

DOCTOR (*confident*). I shall prescribe for mamma. (*Love business.*)

MRS. H. (*speaking from room behind screen*). Sophia! Sophia! (*Wails.*) Oh, where is my bell? (*Groans, as if arising.*) Who is that out there?

CONSTANCE. She'll never consent. (*They kiss again.*)

MRS. H. (*faintly*). Sophia! Constance! Doctor!

DOCTOR (*chuckling*). She's got to.

They bill and coo, not hearing sounds behind screen.

MRS. H. (*in doorway*). Oh! I shall die! (*With great effort, aided by a chair, she gets over to edge of screen, but stumbles against bell.*) Help! help!

DOCTOR (*to* CONSTANCE). Faint—quick! (*He puts an arm around her, as she sinks into a chair, and fans her violently with paper seized from table.*)

MRS. H. (*entering from behind screen*). Doctor! doctor! what is it? I heard such awful sounds!

DOCTOR (*taking empty powder paper from table and dabbing it at* CONSTANCE'S *mouth*). Run, and call Sophy! Quick! Run—run!

MRS. H. (*running briskly to door*). Sophy! Sophy! Sophy!

[*Exit* MRS. H., *calling.*

CONSTANCE. I can't go on with this. It's cruel!

DOCTOR. You must. Don't you see?—we've cured her.

(*Enter* MRS. H., *with* SOPHY *behind her.*)

DOCTOR. Push that sofa over here.

MRS. H. *runs and pushes sofa easily.* DOCTOR *lifts* CONSTANCE *to it, and* (*facing audience*) *listens to her heart. Business:* MRS. H. *and* SOPHY *wring hands and hop about.*

MRS. H. Oh! let me do something more for her! I'll do anything.

SOPHY. It's you that's killed her—keeping her worried with all them nerves of yours. (*She wails.*)

DOCTOR. Shut up, and bring me that bottle.

(SOPHY *starts for it.*)

MRS. H. Let me! Let me! (*Pushes* SOPHY *aside and brings bottle with utmost agility.*) Oh! will she live?

DOCTOR. Calm yourself. It's only a slight attack of faintness. She's taken care of you night and day, till she's worn out.

SOPHY. Amen.

MRS. H. Oh, why didn't she tell me? Whatever can I do for her?

DOCTOR. You should call in your family physician at once. I shall offer him my apologies for intruding.

MRS. H. (*running over to him*). Don't. You mustn't leave her. Never mind me,—but don't desert her!

DOCTOR. Two physicians in one family would be unfortunate, don't you think?

MRS. H. (*drops on her knees before him, seizing one of his hands*). Stanford, I've been a selfish mother! I've thought always of myself. I wouldn't let myself be well. You were right when you told me—oh! oh! bread pills—you were right! Give her back to me, and I'll be good. Sophy, throw away all those bottles!

SOPHY. Oh, lor! (*She goes about gathering bottles.*)

MRS. H. Make my girl well, and I'll give her up to you, if you can win her.

CONSTANCE (*forgetting her rôle and throwing her arms about her mother's neck.*) You dear, good, blessed, absurd mamma! (*She rises from sofa, and assists her mother as she kisses her.*)

MRS. H. Sudden recovery, that!

DOCTOR. Er—(*rising*) she had such a good doctor.

CONSTANCE. The best doctor there is!

MRS. H. You two seem to understand each other rather well.

CONSTANCE. We do.

DOCTOR (*putting an arm round* MOTHER *and another around* DAUGHTER, *who rests head on his shoulder*). Mother, I'll stay and be physician for both of you.

MRS. H. (*enlightened*). You wicked, wicked children!

SOPHY (*returning with great armful of bottles*). Whoopee! It was me as did it!

CURTAIN.

JUN 26 1912

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